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SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE FIFTH CONFERENCE

Report of Czechoslovakia

Paper submitted by Czechoslovakia

National standardization (agenda item 5)

Office treatment of names and administrative structure of national names authorities (5 (b) and (d))

1. Official authorities for standardization of geographical names have not yet been established in Czechoslovakia. Standardization of names of settlements falls under the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Czech Republic for its territory, and under the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Slovak Republic for its territory. Both have the competence to establish the names of municipalities and their parts, and both have special advisory boards (geographical names standardization committees). Names of settlements standardized by these ministries are generally considered official.

2. For non-settlement names within the territory of CSFR on maps at 1:10,000 scale and smaller, as well as geographical names from other parts of the world (Slovak and Czech exonyms) no official authority has been established. The names standardization committees at the Czech and Slovak offices of geodesy

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and cartography are involved on the standardization of this group of geographical names.

3. Standardization of cadastre names of non-settlement microtoponyms are provided by the regional cadastral authorities. Their validity is also limited to territories within the respective competence of the Czech and Slovak offices of geodesy and cartography.

Treatment of names in multilingual areas (5 (c))

4. Languages of minorities have commonly only a regional character. Languages of cartographic works are in the Slovak and Czech languages in their literary (standard) form.

Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors (5 (e))

5. Toponymic guideline for the application of geographical names from the territory of ČSFR was published in Czechoslovakia in 1987. In compliance with Conference resolution IV/4, the finalized edition is being planned for in the coming years.

Toponymic data files (agenda item 6)

Data collection procedures (6 (a))

6. In 1976-1981 a database was created of geographical names of the territory of the Slovak Republic on the basis of topographic maps 1:50,000. Since 1983 the database has been based on topographic maps 1:10,000. Completion of this work is planned for 1996. Data on geographical names from all 38 districts in Slovakia are consequently put into this database. Systematic creation of a database was started in 1972 on the territory of the Czech Republic on the basis of maps at 1:10,000 scale.

Data elements required (6 (b))

7. The following elements on each feature are recorded and put into the files:

Name of the municipality to which the feature belongs

Standardized name and its appropriate non-standardized form

Kind of feature (forest, field, meadow, flow etc.)

Nomenclature of map sheet 1:10,000 on which the feature is located

Additional data (e.g. elevation above sealevel etc.)

Date of standardization

Automatic data processing systems (6 (c))

8. Data on geographical names from the territory of Slovakia are being processed with the application of system CDS (ISIS, version 2.3).

9. Processing of standardized names from the territory of the Czech Republic by the automated system has not yet started.

National gazetteers (6 (e))

10. Since the Fifth Conference, and in compliance with resolutions I/4 and III/2 the following national terminological registers have been published:

Geographical Names of Districts: contains names from 14 districts in Slovakia compiled from topographical maps 1:10,000.

Geographical Names of the Czech and Slovak Republics: contains 23,868 names; produced in pursuance of Conference resolution II/35.

Names of Mountains and Valleys of the Slovak Republic: a thematic selection of already standardized names from topographical maps 1:50,000.

Names of Flows and Water Areas in the Slovak Republic: Riverside of Bodrog and Tisza.

Other publications (6 (f))

Names of States and Their Territorial Parts, 2nd edition: contains Czech and Slovak exonyms.

International Glossary of Geographical Terms used on the General Geographical Maps: in pursuance of Conference resolution II/16; the Glossary contains 859 terms in seven languages.

Terminology in the standardization of geographical names (agenda item 7)

11. Two experts in the field of terminology from Czechoslovakia, D. Ficor and I. Hornansky, are active members of the Working Group on Terminology of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

12. Czechoslovakia was involved in the creation of a detailed glossary, Technical Terminology used in the Standardization of Geographical Names (Glossary 330). Standpoint and comments with respect to amendments, omissions and revision of some terms were invited in the report of the regional Division at the fourteenth meeting of the Group of Experts in Geneva in 1989 as well as in the framework of operational contacts between the members and the Chief of the Working Group. Mr. Hornansky participated at the meeting of the Working Group during the fifteenth meeting in Geneva in 1991. The Glossary is seen in Czechoslovakia as a positive contribution to improving communication in this

field between individual countries as well as a suitable basis for the creation of national versions of glossaries of terminology. Czechoslovakia plans to issue a home version of the Glossary (e.g. terms and definitions in Slovak and English language and terms without definition in Czech, French, Russian, Spanish and German languages, together with individual examples) after finishing work with the Working Group and after acceptance of the obtained results by the Group of Experts.

Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names (agenda item 8)

13. Most of the measures proposed by United Nations conferences on standardization of geographical names are being fulfilled in Czechoslovakia.

14. Fundamental questions concerning the establishment of official authorities for standardization is being only partially fulfilled. The ministries of internal affairs in the Czech and Slovak republics are the bodies competent for the determination of municipality names as well as their parts (e.g. settlements and geographical features on the territory of their respective republics). The names of settlements standardized by these ministries are, in general, official.

15. Standardization of non-settlement geographical names on the territory of CSFR and geographical names from the rest of the world are a subject of interest in the Czech Office of Geodesy and Cartography (COGC) and the Slovak Office of Geodesy and Cartography (SOGC). Use of the names standardized by these bodies has no general official status. COGC and SOGC have made efforts to secure the juridical sanction. As a result an amendatory act is being prepared with the pre-supposition that the official standing of names standardized by COGC and SOGC would be in effect. COGC and SOGC have become the competent official bodies for standardization of names of non-settlement features.

16. Since 1971, and according to the resolution I/4, the systematic standardization of geographical names has been implemented in CSFR in cartographic production. Standardization is provided in compliance with the principles of Slovak and Czech orthography rules.

17. Evidence that the resolutions I/4-E and III/2 are being creatively implemented is the issuing of geographical names publications by both the Slovak and Czech offices of geodesy and cartography.

Exonyms (agenda item 9)

Categories and degree of use of exonyms (9 (a))

18. In cartographic production Czechoslovakia respects, in principle, preferred exonyms. On maps and in atlases assigned for national use endonyms are given with exonyms in brackets so far as necessary.

Principles in reducing exonyms (9 (b))

19. The number of exonyms used in cartographic production has been reduced and stabilized. Rarely used exonyms were re-qualified into a group of historical exonyms. In cartographic production a smaller number of exonyms occurs, bearing out the tendency to reduce the use of exonyms.

Provisional list of exonyms (9 (c))

20. In the Czech Republic a "List of Czech Geographical Place-Names" was published in 1982. In the Slovak Republic the following lists were published: "Slovak exonyms for world cities" (1974); "Exonyms of flows and water areas in the world" (1974); "Slovak exonyms of extra-terrestrial objects" (1976); "Slovak exonyms for formations at horizontal dissection of the earth's surface" (1975).

Features beyond a single sovereignty (agenda item 10)

21. In cartographic works published in Czechoslovakia, the standard Slovak or Czech names are used for geographical features that do not fall under the sovereignty of a particular State (such as oceans, seas, physical formations of vertical section on the ocean bottom, geographical features in the Antarctic etc.).

22. For names of more extensive geographical objects stretching into the territory of several States (mountains, great rivers, lowlands, larger water areas etc.), as a rule the standardized form of exonym is used. Recently a strong tendency has been noticeable towards replacement of this system by using the endonym, with the exonym indicated in brackets. Difficulties arise in selecting the actual form of endonym when the object is located in the territory of more than one State.

23. For extraterrestrial objects, the official Latin (or Greek) names are mostly used, which act as endonyms, following a resolution of the International Astronomical Union. Moreover, for the designation of constellations, comets, sun systems and larger formations on the Moon and the better-known stars and planets, Slovak or Czech exonyms are used, besides the Latin or Greek.

Writing systems and guides to pronunciation (agenda item 11)

Romanization (11 (a))

24. Cartographic works published in Czechoslovakia apply, as a rule, the systems of transcription from non-roman to roman alphabets adopted by the United Nations conferences, including ELOT 743, used for transcription from Greek; from Russian, GOST 83; from Chinese, Pinyin.

25. In applying approved transcription systems, the media, information publications, tourist literature etc. follow cartographic practice.

26. Certain problems arise in transcribing from the Arabic language, because individual Arab countries do not use a unified system of transcription into roman characters.

27. A particular problem is the romanization of geographical names of the nations of the former Soviet Union using non-roman writing. No cartographic bases or geographical names lists are available from Belarus and Ukraine. Transcription from Middle-Asian languages (Kazakh, Uzbek, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, Tajik) is not consistent. Information from the areas in question is insufficient and the local economic situation may not be presumed to cover the production and distribution of their cartographic works. Until these countries are able to fulfil their obligations under Conference resolutions I/10, II/13 and IV/15, the romanized Russian form of geographical names will probably be used, written according to the system GOST 83.

28. Considerable hesitancy in the use of GOST 83 results from the fact that this system is only partially applied in non-cartographic context in Russia. A number of other romanization systems successfully compete with it (e.g. in the postal services, air transport, railway transport, foreign presentation of proper names etc.).

Meetings and conferences (agenda item 13)

29. Czechoslovakia participated in the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1987 in Montreal, Canada, as well as in the fourteenth and fifteenth meetings of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names in Geneva, in 1989 and 1991, respectively.

30. Czechoslovakia, as a leader of the regional Division on East, Central and South-East Europe in the period 1987-1992, organized three meetings.

31. The ninth meeting of the Division was held in Bratislava in March 1989. Participating were representatives from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland.

32. The tenth meeting was held in Prague in June 1991. Participating were the delegates from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. Bulgaria apologized for its absence and sent written materials to the negotiations.

33. The eleventh meeting was held in Bratislava in May 1992 with the participation of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia in the role of observer. Bulgaria apologized for its absence and sent written materials to the negotiations.